

BELIEFS & Values

Annual church, temple tours coming

By BARD PERT TEMPLTON SPECIAL WRITER

The Ecumenical Institute of Jewish-Christian Studies in Southfield is hosting will host its sixth annual Church-Synagogue Tour on Sunday, Oct. 4.

Organizing the tour will be at no cost, will have an opportunity to tour three hours of worship to learn more about the religious traditions from the religious leaders at each locale.

"We always select locations that are close together and that can be quickly traveled to, like within 15 minutes or so," Yuhas said.

tours in Southfield, West Bloomfield, Farmington Hills and Novi and without exception the churches and synagogues are very receptive to taking part in the program."

The general public likes the idea as well and Yuhas usually welcomes 76 to 100 people for the afternoon event. The crowd includes people of all ages including some youth groups, she said.

"Actually, depending on the weather and how the Lions are doing we get a reasonably good turnout most years," smiled Yuhas.

The clergy at each stop adopt a relaxed format. For example a Priest may point out special aspects of the sanctuary such as the significance of the stained glass windows or the stations of the cross, Yuhas said.

"They talk in general about their traditions and what's incorporated in their worship services," she said. "And we do encourage them to leave some time for questions at the end."

Yuhas said at times members of the congregation may assist in the days tour and in some cases lay people in the church will talk about their roles in the congregation. The details are left to the discretion of each hour of worship that agrees to participate that day.

The tour is kind of special this year because the Oct. 4 date is the start of the Jewish holiday, Sukkot, which commemorates the 10-year wandering of the Jews in the desert on the way to the Promised Land. It is also a time for people to understand and thanksgiving for the fall harvest. During this holiday open-roofed booths or huts - known as sukkot - are built in homes and synagogues, and some Jews eat their meals in these sukkot. There will be a sukkot set-up outside at Temple Emanuel for guests to visit following the final tour at the temple.

"It is kind of like a Thanksgiving type of experience," Yuhas said. "And we serve the guests refreshments at that last stop." Finishing the annual program has become pretty simple for Yuhas who simply picks a pair of a churches and a synagogue to call. All are always eager to take part. Yuhas only doubts have sprung up from time to time based on the small turnout.

"Every year I think there's only 100 or so people maybe I'll quite doing this but then the response of the people taking the tour is so wonderful," Yuhas said. "They say 'I drive by this church all the time and always

wondered what it looked like inside and I realize they might never have had the opportunity to see it."

The Institute is an organization which promotes Jewish-Christian studies and provides a forum for people to understand each other and ask questions that they have on their minds about others religious beliefs.

While literature about the Ecumenical Institute is available during this tour, Yuhas said the event has nothing to do with recruiting or any "hard sell" stuff. The most participants can expect to come away with regarding the institute is perhaps a schedule of their upcoming events.

This tour program is always a very up and very positive experience for everyone," Yuhas said.

The schedule is as follows on Oct. 4 St. Dennis Church at 2000 E. Twelve Mile Road in Royal Oak, from 1:30 to 2:15 p.m. First Presbyterian Church at 629 Hendrie, Royal Oak, from 2:30 to 3:15 p.m. and Temple Emanuel at 14450 W. Ten Mile Road, Oak Park from 3:30 to 4:15 p.m.

There is no charge for those wishing to take part in the tour but planners prefer you make a reservation by calling (248) 353-2434.

worked with Habitat For Humanity and led a group on a mission work trip to Kenya, Africa.

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Film/discussion Series, viewing and evaluating current films; a weekly Crossroads Program during Lent with soup and bread as the meal, followed by a guest speaker; a two-year Kerygma Program - an in-depth Bible Study series; a Leadership Retreat beginning each year with all Church leaders invited to share ideas on planning short and long term goals.

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Lathrup loses pastor of Community Cong.

By MARGA COVERDILL SPECIAL WRITER

Community Congregational Church in Lathrup Village said goodbye to its minister Sept. 13.

The Rev. Donald P. Olsen, minister of the only church in Lathrup Village for the past six years, is moving to the national level of the Congregational churches, having accepted the position of Associate Executive Secretary of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches in Oak Creek, Wis.

His specific duties will be in the area of Missions, Congrega-

tional Church Development and the new area of exploration and implementation of technology.

Olsen earned his bachelor's degree in philosophy and theology from Bethel College in St. Paul, Minn. In 1989 he earned his Master of Divinity degree from United Theological Seminary in the Twin Cities, graduating with honors, winning five specific awards for excellence and having been a teaching assistant at the school.

From 1989 thru 1992 he was Associate minister of the Congregational Church of Manassas, New York where he actively

worked with Habitat For Humanity and led a group on a mission work trip to Kenya, Africa.

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Religious have right, obligation to discuss issues facing society

Should Adam Cardinal Maida be forbidden to speak on public policy issues? Several recent letters to the editor of a major metropolitan newspaper expressed exactly that.

FOCUS ON THEOLOGY



REV. RONALD P. BYARS

The public has frequently misunderstood the separation doctrine and misapplied it. The intention of separating church and state was to guarantee the independence of each institution from the other. Government does not collect money for religious institutions, or grant those institutions special privileges in the courts or the legislatures.

To put it plainly, the church has not right to control the making of laws or the judicial review of those laws. On the other hand, the state has not right to interfere with the "free exercise of religion." The state may not censor religious institutions or their officers. Ordination does not cancel the constitutional right of free speech.

Cardinal Maida has not been deprived of his citizenship by virtue of holding a religious office. Nor does the state have the right to muzzle a corporate entity - it the American Bar Association, the American Legion, the American Civil Liberties Union or the Roman Catholic Church.

Some segments of the public seem to have an unfortunately narrow definition of "religion." They seem to presume that

religion has to do only with the affairs of another world. In that view, religion has nothing at all to say about practical matters beyond the level of the isolated individual. Religion, supposedly, has nothing to do with persons in society. It has nothing to do, they presume, with that huge network of relationships which connect us to other people, institutions, nations and the Earth itself.

And yet, all of those relationships - each and every one - have a moral or ethical dimension. Religious bodies are interested in morality and ethics, not just a way to appease God and guarantee admission to a blissful afterlife. Religious bodies care about fair and just relationships because they believe that this is what God wants for human beings.

The Biblical religions - Judaism and Christianity - have a powerful sense that the God of their experience, requires justice. It's not always clear, of course, what justice might mean in a particular situation. It's not always clear exactly what morality might look like in a specific situation. This is why Jews and Christians have a long tradition of struggling with these questions in dialogue with scripture.

There is no question but that the God of the Bible is a god who requires us to think deeply and carefully about things like end-of-life issues, care of the environment, racial justice - even the mutual obligations of workers and employers.

Religious bodies step over a line when they endorse candidates or align themselves with political parties. But they have every right to make their points of view publicly known. They have every right to a place in the marketplace where ideas are exchanged. They have every right to try to persuade people to look at things

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